DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 396 447 EA 027 693

AUTHOR Kraus, Christine M.
TITLE Administrative Training: What Really Prepares Administrators for the Job?
PUB DATE Apr 96
NOTE 28p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, April 8-12, 1996).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Education; Adult Learning; *Educational Administration; Higher Education; Internship Programs; *Leadership Training; Management Development; Mentors; Models; Professional Education; Reflective Teaching

ABSTRACT

This paper describes part of a study (Kraus 1996) involving 25 school administrators who attended one of five administrator preparation programs at four New England universities. The study addressed research questions regarding perceptions of administrators' job preparedness and how components of formal training programs (i.e., internships, mentoring relationships, reflective practice, and student cohorts) prepared school leaders for their jobs. The findings include discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of student cohorts, the key role of reflection within a program, the authenticity and connectedness provided by internships, and the importance of mentoring relationships. It offers a training model called the Strategic Model for Administrator Preparation, which integrates adult learning principles and cognitive psychology theory. The model views administrator preparation as a lifelong learning activity and prepares future educators to be reflective thinkers. Components of the model include situated learning, modeling, coaching, reflection, articulation, exploration, and authentic assessment. One figure is included. (Contains 35 references.) (Author/LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 396 447

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
C. Kraus
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

Administrative training: What really prepares administrators for the job?

Christine M. Kraus

University of Connecticut
School of Education
Department of Educational Leadership U-93
Storrs, Connecticut 06269
FAX: (860) 486-4028
e-mail: gkraus@maverick.facil.uconn.edu

A Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association

New York City
April 8-12, 1996

EA027693

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

This paper describes part of a study (Kraus, 1996) involving 25 school administrators who attended one of five administrator preparation programs at four New England universities. The study addressed research questions regarding perceptions of administrators' job preparedness and how components of formal training programs (i.e., internships, mentoring relationships, reflective practice, and student cohorts) prepared school leaders for their jobs. The findings include discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of student cohorts, the key role of reflection within a program, the authenticity and connectedness provided by an internship, and the importance of mentoring relationships. A *Strategic Model for Administrator Preparation* that is grounded in adult learning principles and cognitive psychology theory is proposed. Components of the model include situated learning, modeling, coaching, reflection, articulation, exploration, and authentic assessment.

The demands for improved education, (Searching for the Right Reforms, 1989), the dissatisfaction with current traditional administrative training (Milstein & Associates, 1993; Murphy & Hallinger, 1987; UCEA, 1987), and the need to prepare candidates for future educational leadership positions (Anderson, 1989) have challenged universities to reconceptualize their administrator preparation programs. This reconceptualization has been hampered by disagreement about what constitutes a viable administrator preparation program and by a reluctance to enforce vigorous standards (Murphy, 1990; National Commission for Excellence in Educational Administration [NCEEA], 1987). In response to these challenges the Danforth Foundation partially funded 22 non-traditional preparation programs throughout the country (Barnett & Muse, 1993; Cordeiro et al., 1993). Each of these programs is unique and influenced by the characteristics of the place, the personnel, the financial support, and the institutions in which they were developed (Milstein & Associates, 1993). These programs are labor intensive and costly to operate (Murphy, 1993), and there is little empirical data that measures whether graduates of these non-traditional programs are better prepared for administrative jobs than graduates of traditional administrative preparation programs. Because 60% of school leaders will retire by the year 2000, it is imperative that researchers define how programs can best prepare graduates to assume administrative leadership roles in schools.

Background

While traditional programs vary in their approaches to administrative preparation, the overarching framework of Danforth programs includes four core components; internships, mentoring relationships, reflective practice, and student cohorts. Support for the use of these program components can be found in literature related to adult development and learning, interactive leadership, cohort and support systems, cognitive psychology, and reflective practice. In particular, the literature suggests that internships provide: a problem-centered approach to learning (Brookfield, 1986, Knowles, 1987), opportunities for

self-directed learning (Brookfield, 1986, Candy, 1991; Knowles, 1987), knowledge acquisition through experience (Freire, 1989; Knowles, 1987, Kolb, 1984), opportunities to enhance decision-making and problem-solving skills (Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1994), and a link between theory and practice (Milstein, 1990). The research also suggests that mentoring relationships enhance internship learning, promote professional initiation, increase skill development of interns, develop administrative skills and self-confidence of interns (Hills, 1975; Krueger, 1993), and allow for feedback and reflective learning (First & Knudsen, 1992). Additionally, studies report that cohorts can enhance student self-esteem, provide peer support, increase affiliation, and provide opportunities for collaboration and networking (Hill, 1992; Yerkes, Norris, Basom, & Barnett, 1994). Lastly, research suggests that reflective practice improves the problem-solving, decision-making, and complex- thinking skills of administrative candidates (Prestine & LeGrand, 1991).

Although a considerable amount of research has been conducted regarding administrator preparation programs, there are few empirical studies that have determined if the components of these programs are linking preparation to practice. This study addressed research questions regarding perceptions of administrators'[1] job preparedness and explored how components of formal training programs (i.e., internships, mentoring relationships, reflective practices, and student cohorts) prepared school leaders for their jobs.

Methods and Procedures

In a modified naturalistic design, this study allowed the researcher to describe and interpret aspects of administrator preparation through the participants' eyes. Data was collected over a 4-month period and included semi-structured, audiotaped interviews with principals and assistant principals.

[1] The term "administrator" refers to principals and assistant principals.

Criterion sampling was used to select 25 administrators who were graduates of one of five administrator preparation programs in New England. Of the five programs studied, only one program utilized the Danforth framework. Length of time reported as a principal or assistant principal for the 25 participants ranged from 3 months to 4 1/2 years (M=22 months). The 25 school administrators were interviewed at their workplaces.

Data Analysis

The interview data was analyzed using taxonomic and domain analysis (Spradley, 1979). Patterns and themes were grouped and regrouped in terms of semantic relationships. The findings have been divided into four sections. The first section identifies the specific differences between the experiences of the Danforth and non-Danforth program graduates that administrators believed contributed to their administrative job preparedness and learning. This is followed by a discussion of other program components and themes that were general to all five programs. A third section describes those experiences outside of formal training that contributed to the job preparedness of the administrators regardless of their training program. Lastly, recommendations for future changes to formal administrator preparation program are described.

Analysis of the interview data indicated that differences existed between the experiences of Danforth and non-Danforth program graduates that affected job preparedness and learning. These differences related to student cohorts, mentoring relationships, and reflective practice. All participants noted the importance of internships.

Student Cohorts

One of the most significant findings of the study was the importance that the Danforth program graduates attributed to participation in student cohorts. Many of the Danforth graduates indicated it was

the most significant part of their program. Of the five programs studied, only the Danforth program was designed so that students completed core courses and attended reflection seminars and social functions as a formal cohort. Some of the non-Danforth program graduates were part of informal cohorts (i.e., they jointly decided to take all the same classes together or formed study groups throughout their graduate training).

Advantages of cohorts. The themes which emerged from the data regarding the advantages of cohorts were: (a) *the sense of family*, (b) *the impact on learning*, and (c) *the availability of networking resources and job counseling*. The first theme regarding the benefits of cohort formation is *sense of family*. A female administrator described the familiarity of her cohort, "We were like brothers and sisters." In particular, those who participated in a cohort received high levels of support, felt strong group affiliation, increased their self-confidence, and felt a high comfort level and sense of security. These benefits were noted by several of the Danforth program graduates. A male elementary school principal commented, "The biggest benefit was...emotional support." Many administrators indicated that this support extended to the job. An assistant principal said, "I could tell you everyone's phone number and call any one of them at work and I wouldn't feel bad that I was interrupting their day." The support system did not just include Danforth cohort members, but it also included their mentors. Cohort participants discussed how through collaborative efforts, they established a secure and trusting environment where group members were willing to share. A female high school assistant principal confirmed this idea,

> I think when you trust you are not afraid to make mistakes and you don't see them as mistakes in a negative sense; you see them as opportunities for growth. It's easier to go out there and step off the curb if you know you have a support system.

The second theme regarding cohorts was the *impact on learning*. Danforth program administrators indicated that cohort grouping increased academic performance and enhanced their reflective ability. Danforth program graduates described how completing administrative training as a group allowed for accelerated learning; once group dynamics were in place learning occurred more quickly. These graduates also felt they had a closer relationship with professors. One elementary school principal commented on the group process and how it enhanced learning. She said, I really liked being with the same people course to course because you already knew the way [they thought] so you knew...how to dialogue with them." Another administrator reflected on the shared perspectives of his cohort group and how he valued others' expertise. He noted, "We could learn from each other and bring that info to our next job."

Lastly, the Danforth graduates emphasized how the cohort allowed for *job counseling* and provided a built-in *networking system*. As cohort members searched and interviewed for administrative positions they discussed their experiences with their peers. In addition, the majority of the relationships established by these cohort members are ongoing. While many of the non-Danforth program administrators only see fellow graduates at conferences, meetings, or an occasional get together, most of the Danforth graduates maintain social and professional relationships.

Disadvantages of cohorts - *"The 'haves' and the 'have nots.'* " The Danforth graduates cited several disadvantages of cohort grouping. Three themes regarding *identity, competition and jealousy*, and *limited perspectives* emerged from the data. Several administrators addressed the first theme of *identity*. Within the cohorts they reported role assignment, stereotyping, favoritism, formation of cliques, and alienation. Several administrators spoke about the formation of cliques within their Danforth program cohorts. One graduate commented, "It was interesting to see how the group split. The 'haves' and the

'have nots.' Those that were more high powered appeared to be more serious and viewed by some as brighter." An assistant principal talked about how some Danforth program cohort members alienated themselves when they individually completed the one required course outside the department. He told the following story,

> Four of us took an Ed Psych class together with undergrads, masters, and doctoral students. It was interesting that we found ourselves to be very isolated and we almost did that ourselves. We were also the most vocal and the most active and the most "everything" which is embarrassing. So I don't think we learned as much from the group as we needed.

The second theme regarding disadvantages of cohorts dealt with *competition and jealousy*. A few Danforth program cohort members reported increased competition. An elementary principal who completed the Danforth program described these feelings,

> Maybe the negative part of this is a certain level of competition. You knew there were other people that were turning in the same work you were, so you knew yours had better be up to par. You got to know those people and their abilities.

Another Danforth graduate sometimes sensed jealousy in her cohort. She commented, "I think that other people in the cohort sometimes felt that I had other advantages because I had a job and I had so many connections and so many prior experiences."

The final theme that emerged from the data was *limited perspective*. While several Danforth program graduates voiced concerned over the lack of "fresh voices" in a cohort, other cohort participants felt the group was balanced by the variety of expertise found in the group. One cohort participant commented, "The obvious disadvantage is you're not getting as broad a range of perspectives, but I think we were a pretty diverse group."

While the Danforth program administrators reported several disadvantages of cohorts, they suggested that the benefits of completing administrative training in a cohort far outweighed these

disadvantages. A high school assistant principal who graduated from the Danforth program gave a very positive personal overview of cohorts,

> You are more willing to share what might concern you or the things that made you happy --your own successes. There's something about going through [a program] with one whole group and watching other people grow as you grow and watching some grow faster than others. It's a neat experience.

Mentoring relationships

A second finding which differentiated Danforth and non-Danforth program graduates focused on long term relationships with mentors. One Danforth graduate spoke for most of her cohort when she commented, "I would see a mentoring relationship as something that would last through your first few years." Most of the Danforth program graduates had developed strong relationships with their mentors and continue to seek their support, advice, and networking ability. Two graduates describe their continuing relationship with their mentors. The first administrator commented, "She offered a lot of insight into what good administration is. That's why I call her once a month to solicit advice." The second graduate added, "She's been very supportive and encouraging. She did some mock interviews with me when I was going to apply for this position. I probably talk to her every few weeks." The majority of the non-Danforth administrators do not maintain professional or social relationships with their mentors unless they are currently working with them.

Reflective Practice - "*Pearls of Wisdom*"

The third finding which differentiated the Danforth and the non-Danforth graduates was reflective practice. Although many of the administrators felt that reflective practice occurred during group activities (e.g., discussion, simulation, case studies, group debriefing, problem analysis), the Danforth program graduates emphasized that reflection was a critical element of their administrative preparation. They described how reflective practice was integrated into their training through journaling, reflective seminars,

and internships. In addition, several Danforth administrators felt that reflection was a product of the cohort.

The administrators discussed how writing (e.g., research papers, journaling) promoted reflection. The Danforth program graduates, in particular, spoke at length about their journaling process. A Danforth program graduate noted, "We journaled about specific incidents, about the day, concerns, self-confidence, feelings, goals, and aspirations--everything. We used our journals for self-reflection and then got together...and reflected as a group on our journal writing." A fellow graduate felt journaling was a positive way to improve personal growth and enhance the thinking process without being concerned about grades.

Administrators reported how reflection seminars were a way they reflected during their administrative training. These seminars were scheduled monthly outside of class time and allowed students to delve into particular problems, to gain other perspectives on issues, and to make connections between their field experiences and theory. In essence, these seminars allowed for thinking time. These sessions promoted continuous learning and often allowed students to learn from practitioners in the field since mentors and outside guests attended the sessions. A Danforth program graduate describes the value of these seminars,

> That was another really good part of the program--when the mentors got together with the mentees [during] our reflection seminars. Those were helpful because I got these little pearls of wisdom from each one of the other mentors. Each one had something to say. I would walk out with this little string of pearls every time I left.

At present four of the five administrator preparation programs studied have incorporated reflective type seminars into their programs. While these seminars are now routinely scheduled for students, not all the graduates interviewed from these four programs participated in reflection seminars because they graduated prior to their inception.

A third way reflective practice was integrated in the Danforth program was through internships. When a field experience provided opportunities for reflective practice, interns were able to make connections between events. A Danforth program graduate described this experience,

> You come to understand the threads that are woven or the branches that branch out from an experience. You begin to understand that things really aren't unique to each day. What happens on one day had roots somewhere else.

During internships, formal and informal feedback sessions provided opportunities for reflection for both mentees and mentors. An assistant principal who graduated from the Danforth program appreciated whatever time and advice his busy inner city school mentors could provide during his two Danforth program internship experiences. He spoke enthusiastically about his field experience,

> I had such an opportunity to have their time. They said later that they enjoyed that. That's where we had lots of reflection. It made them more conscious of what they were doing and why and what for because I would ask a lot of questions. We got together everyday.

A fellow Danforth program graduate summed up the reflective process she experienced during her graduate training,

> When I think about what we did, writing in the journals on a daily basis and having reflection sessions with everyone and the principals from other schools and talking about specific concerns and issues, it was such a good process and I wish it was happening now because I'd have so much more to contribute, so much more to ask. Reflection is a wonderful way to clear up a lot of the mystery and begin to realize, yes I'm on the right track.

Administrative Preparation: Findings Across Programs

Distinct differences existed between the Danforth and the non-Danforth program graduates regarding how student cohorts, reflective practice, and mentoring relationships affected job preparedness and learning. Yet, several general themes regarding internships and mentoring relationships emerged from an analysis of the data across the five administrator preparation programs.

Internships - *"Seeing the big picture"*

Administrators suggested that internships provided authenticity to the job, connected theory and practice, built confidence, allowed them to work with an expert, helped them understand political systems, and provided an access to a networking system. Administrators reported more satisfaction with their internship when their responsibilities were scaffolded by the mentor principal. Interns became more accustomed to the environment and increased their confidence when their mentor staggered activities. Choice of mentor principal often determined the value of the internship. The internship provided a safety net for those trying out their new skills and allowed them to make mistakes. Specifically, administrators reported that internships helped them, "...transition from interacting with people as a teacher to interacting with people as an administrator" as well as, "...get a sense of the day-to-day practicalities." Administrators also emphasized that the internship gave them a broad picture of the administrator's role. Field experience helped them, "...see the other side of the desk so to speak. When you're teaching you're so involved in your subject matter particularly for the secondary level that all you focus on is the subject matter. You're so isolated, you don't see the big picture."

A final comment made by a Danforth program graduate was, "My program really prepared me to be an instructional leader. My internship helped prepare me to be a fire extinguisher. It's the theory as opposed to the practical and experiential." In addition, some of the administrators believed the internship provided networking resources and a marketing advantage when seeking work. A recent follow-up study at a non-Danforth program indicated that 26 out of 30 graduates who obtained administrative positions had completed internships. The department chairperson suggested that the internship, "...appears to be a vehicle for graduates to market themselves and gives them something to talk to other than their coursework" (W. Holland, personal communication, May 10, 1995).

Although most of the administrators who participated in internships viewed them as being a critical part of their job preparation, there were some negative viewpoints on the subject. Sometimes the school would utilize the intern to best benefit the school rather than to develop the skill level of the intern. Some interns were given repetitive tasks and limited responsibilities. Interns often had limited authority because of their nonpaid role in school. One administrator commented, "Most of my time was spent in discipline and it got to be a negative."

Mentoring Relationships

The program graduates also discussed different types of mentoring relationships and how mentors provided support, feedback, and opportunities for learning and reflection. Mentors shared information and helped interns understand school politics. Most of the administrators interviewed identified some type of mentoring relationship that they established during a work experience, graduate training, or while in their present job. They identified mentors who were assigned during internships (i.e., mentor principals); those that were sought out; (i.e., educational leaders, supervisors, principals); those that sought out mentees for their leadership abilities, and those who influenced students during the course of graduate training (i.e., professors, department chairpersons, and program coordinators). Of those mentors identified, many of the administrators named certain professors as being particularly helpful throughout their graduate training. These professors were viewed as mentors because they were supportive, encouraging, understood the needs of the students, modeled practices, and communicated student strengths.

In summary, a Danforth graduate addressed many facets of mentoring relationships when she reflected on her experience:

> She [my mentor] allowed me to apply what I was learning. She was somebody to help me move forward. I had set some goals and objectives for myself and she was there to help me obtain those. I went into it thinking of it as a student teaching type of process and it's

> really not. She came to realize what my abilities were and the nice thing about the mentor relationship is that it has continued and we now are even serving together on a State Department Committee and she calls periodically to check in. I can call when I have a problem.

Beyond Administrator Preparation Programs: Additional Findings

Several prevalent themes emerged from the interview data that were extraneous to the research questions. The 25 administrators interviewed cited common experiences outside of their administrative training that contributed to their job preparation and learning. These experiences were not particular to just Danforth or non-Danforth program graduates, but to the entire group of administrators. In addition to their formal administrative training, these administrators identified their classroom teaching experiences, leadership roles, group experiences, previous work experience, on the job administrative experience, and life experiences as instrumental in preparing them for their administrative positions.

Reality of the Job: "*It Breaks Over Your Head Like a Wave*"

Although the administrators felt prepared for their job tasks, many were not prepared for the reality of the job. Even those with field experience felt overwhelmed by the work load, the immediacy of issues, the constraints on their time, and the politics of the job. An assistant principal in a large suburban high school, spoke about her two years on the job:

> In teaching you can build into your day slower periods when you feel you need it on the other end. In this job there is no control. This job breaks over your head like a wave--every two seconds there's another one. You never can get your breath.

Teaching

While the change in educational roles was often difficult, all 25 administrators identified their classroom teaching as vital to their preparation as a principal or assistant principal. One administrator noted the value of teaching, "You need to look at things through a teacher's perspective. Not having that ability or experience would make this job close to impossible." Additionally, classroom teaching

experience helped administrators with parent, student, and teacher relationships; legal issues; the evaluation process; and curriculum development. Teaching also provided opportunities for administrators to develop oral and written communication skills, and interpersonal skills. Staff development opportunities afforded while teaching allowed for continual learning (e.g., new teaching techniques, training in adult education principles). Numerous administrators valued their special education experience; especially when they faced IEPs (Individualized Education Plans), legal issues, and curriculum development.

Many of the administrators had participated in the Beginning Educator Support Program (BEST) while teaching. They indicated this experience helped them understand the Connecticut Teaching Competencies and the teacher evaluation process. One graduate who had worked with the State Department for two years before becoming a principal commented, "I trained assessors to assess and I found that in terms of supervision of teachers, that was the best experience that I could have had."

Leadership Roles

In addition to teaching experiences, all 25 administrators had taken on leadership roles prior to becoming an administrator. These leadership roles were within education in a teaching capacity, within education in a non-teaching capacity, or outside education. Leadership roles within education in a teaching capacity included: chairperson for a school or district-wide committee, team leader, teacher coordinator, student-teacher adviser, president of the teacher's union, and head of the curriculum evaluation committee. Leadership roles within education in a non-teaching capacity included: curriculum specialist, language arts coordinator, instructional specialist, and summer school director. Leadership roles outside of education included choir director and head of community groups.

In these leadership roles both within education and outside education, administrators learned to supervise people, to work collaboratively, to motivate others, to deal with legal issues, to delegate tasks, and to work within a system. These roles also helped administrators refine their oral and written communication skills, presentation skills, and interpersonal skills.

Group Experience

In addition to leadership experience, numerous administrators cited their group experience as being relevant to their administrative preparation. These administrators had been active participants of committees related to education; (e.g., Connecticut Mastery Testing Scoring Committee, evaluation committee, school development committee, curriculum review committee), as well as committees outside of school; (e.g., church committees, the grange, community groups). Committee work expanded their expertise in a particular area (e.g., curriculum, budget, finance, personnel) often giving them a bird's eye view of the administrative world and helped them develop team building skills.

Previous Work Experience

Several administrators mentioned that previous experience outside of education helped prepare them for their jobs. From experiences in counseling, social work, and corporate work, administrators developed skills in management, budgeting, problem solving, and conflict resolution. They also learned to work within a political structure and with the community.

Three themes emerged from the data regarding how administrators became prepared for their jobs prior to their formal administrative training. Some administrators as part of their teaching or non-teaching careers routinely took on leadership roles and involved themselves in learning situations because they wanted to expand their knowledge and remain a part of the educational community. It was only after years of involvement that they decided to seek formal administrative training. Other administrators sought

out opportunities to increase their exposure to administration. An assistant principal in an urban junior high school set her goals on an administrative job the first day she began teaching. She commented:

> I always believe that wherever you aspire to that's where you should be. So I would never be at meetings so much with just teachers. I'd go to principal or administrative meetings. So they knew me--that was going to be my chair some day.

A third group was sought out for their leadership abilities and mentored by an administrator. These administrators were given opportunities to enhance their leadership skills and administrative knowledge. They were strongly encouraged by mentors to pursue administration.

Administrator Preparation Program Recommendations

Based on their experiences and their perceptions of the needs of administrators, the graduates of the five administrator preparation programs made recommendations for changes in future training of administrators that they believe would better prepare future graduates for the workplace. Suggestions focused on internships, courses, administrative support, and program leadership. All the administrators believed an internship was a crucial component of training. Suggestions were made for paid internships, longer internships (half a semester to a full year), and multiple internship experiences. Other recommendations included more extensive coursework in the following areas: (a) budgeting; (b) scheduling; (c) special education (i.e., laws, the IEP [Individualized Education Plan] process, diversity of learners); (d) technology; (e) curriculum (i.e., exposure to different levels and evaluation skills); (f) school law; and (g) statistics (i.e., application of statistics in reports, analyses, test results). The addition of Spanish as a required course was also recommended. Administrators suggested the "chunking of courses" (i.e., sequenced modules that are integrated throughout the program). Lastly, several administrators suggested the creation of a university post-graduation support group for beginning administrators. This group would provide a forum for graduates to continue their academic and professional development.

Conclusions

While the findings of this study suggested that internships, mentoring relationships, reflective practice, and student cohorts were perceived by participants as effective strategies for preparing administrators for the workplace and enhancing their learning, no one program inclusively provided all the educational experiences or supports that administrators reported would have improved their job preparation. Based on the analysis of the results of this study and borrowing from adult learning principles (Knowles, 1987; Kolb, 1984; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Mezirow, 1990) and cognitive psychology literature (Choi & Hannafin, 1995; Ertmer & Cennamo, 1995; Lave & Wenger, 1991), the *Strategic Model for Administrator Preparation* depicted in Figure 1 provides an integrative approach to training that could strengthen current programs.. Because administrators emphasized that learning was most useful when it was experiential, contextual, and supported, the program components (i.e. internships, mentoring relationships, reflective practice, and cohorts) were integrated into a cognitive apprenticeship framework. Specifically, cognitive apprenticeships may be useful to administrator preparation because: (a) They are based in a culture of expert practice in which students communicate about and engage in problem-solving skills and reflective practice. Instruction is embedded within authentic workplace activities. (b) The modeling-coaching-fading methods of support promote intrinsic motivation and real learning. (c) Students work collaboratively, giving and receiving help. (d). Students can compare individual learning processes (rather than just products) (Ertmer & Cennamo, 1995).

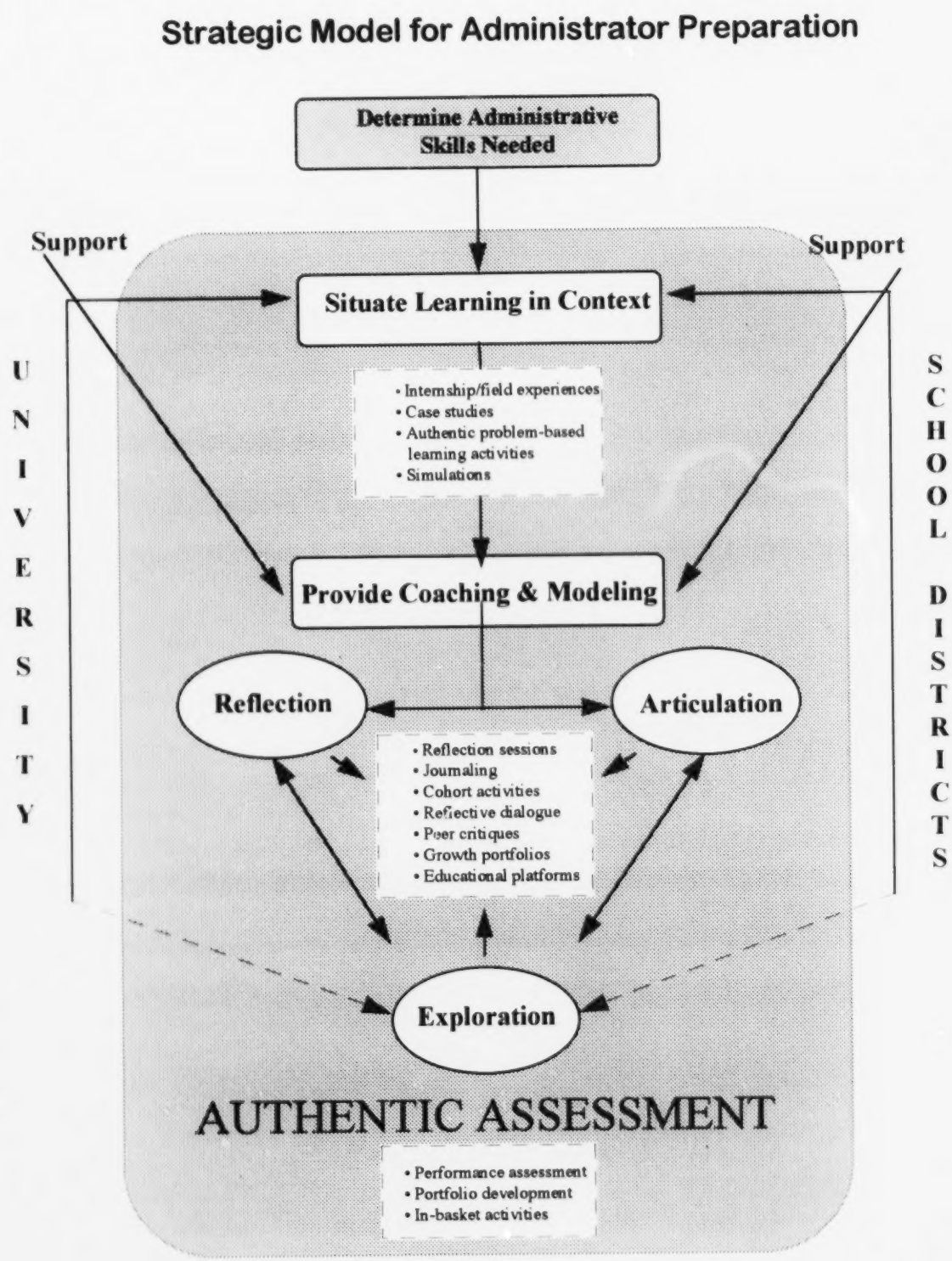

Figure 1. Strategic model for administrator preparation

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The seven components of the *Strategic Model for Administrator Preparation* are: situated learning, modeling, coaching, reflection, articulation, exploration and assessment. Program content is based on a needs assessment to determine the administrative skills that are needed in the workplace.

Situated Learning

In this model, learning is "situated" and takes place in multiple contexts that mirror how knowledge is used in the workplace to solve real problems and complete tasks (Ertmer & Cennamo, 1995). Instructors use a variety of instructional methods including internship/field experiences, case studies, authentic problem-based learning activities, and simulations to place problem solving within a meaningful context so students are able to identify and define problems within a content area. In this model, content is not viewed as inert, but is part of a process that allows students "to use their knowledge...under the guidance of the expert to teach them to learn on their own more skillfully" (Collins et al., 1989, p. 459).

Additionally, in the situated learning environment, curriculum is integrated and program content is monitored and adjusted to address changing issues (e.g., new instructional strategies, assessment tools, technology). Students focus on understanding "the whole" before attempting to master "the specific parts" (Prestine & LeGrand, 1991). Learning activities are sequenced and "scaffolded," increasing the complexity and diversity of knowledge and tasks "...creating 'the match' between the cognitive level of the learner and the characteristics of instruction" (Greenfield, 1984, p. 188).

Support. Throughout the training program, university faculty and field-based mentors from local school districts provide support and direction to students by coaching and modeling. They promote the administrative and cognitive skill development of students through activities that promote reflection,

articulation, and exploration; processes that overlap in practice. In addition, faculty and mentors assess student growth and learning during the training program.

Provide coaching and modeling. Coaching and modeling are designed to help students develop cognitive and metacognitive skills through guided observation and supported practice (Prestine & LeGrand, 1991). During instructional activities and field experiences, instructors and mentors model expert cognitive and metacognitive processes. In this way students learn those processes that experts use to handle complex tasks (Collins et al., 1989). Ertmer & Cennamo (1995) suggest that, "By combining demonstrations with detailed explanations of what is happening and why, cognitive apprenticeship models bring these tacit processes into the open so students can observe, enact, and practice them while receiving help and feedback from the teacher and from other students" (p. 47).

Specifically, in the case study and problem-based process, instructors do not simply offer "the right answer;" rather, they demonstrate the process of using and managing knowledge in the problem-solving process. During internships, principal mentors model administrative practice for interns and explain decision-making processes with their interns.

Coaching. Coaching is a method used to guide students through carefully designed learning experiences that focus on problem-solving processes rather than mastery of content. Instructors and mentors provide, and then gradually remove physical, strategic and emotional support to students as they refine their administrative and cognitive skills. Instructors and mentors initially provide students with detailed information, resources, direction, encouragement, and feedback regarding learning activities and internship responsibilities. As students' cognitive and administrative expertise increases, the amount of support and direction (coaching) decreases. This process encourages risk taking, independence and self-directed learning. University field supervisors are responsible for providing guidance and direction to

interns during their field experiences. These supervisors act as student advocates and oversee that students are afforded various opportunities throughout their internship.

For the modeling and coaching process to work effectively, programs must provide intensive mentor training to mentor principals and university field supervisors so they fully understand their responsibilities to interns. Furthermore, university instructors and field-based mentors must understand their roles as model and coach.

Reflection. Reflection and articulation are methods designed to help students to focus their observations of expert problem solving and to understand their own problem-solving strategies. In this training model journaling, reflective seminars, observation, role-playing, in-basket activities, case studies, problem-based learning, field experiences, and cohort activities are used to stimulate reflective thought and action. During these activities, cohort members compare themselves with an expert and develop an internal model of expertise to use to guide future practice. This process encourages students to develop a "reflective practitioner" stance (Schön, 1987) and to think critically about what they do.

Articulation. Collins et al. (1989) describe articulation as "any method of getting students to articulate their knowledge, reasoning, or problem-solving processes in a domain" (p. 482). These methods encourage students to explain and reflect on their knowledge, ideas, goals, and problem-solving efforts. For example, group discussion and reflection seminars allow thinking to be observed and shared with group members. Additionally, discussion groups encourage dialogue that links theory and practice (Prestine & LeGrand, 1991). Journaling, written problem-solving analyses, and critiquing others during cooperative learning activities give students additional insight and the ability to compare knowledge across contexts (Collins, 1991). For example, throughout their training students could develop an educational platform articulating their specific ideas and values related to educational leadership.

Exploration. The exploration feature emphasizes learner autonomy in defining and solving problems (Collins et al, 1989). Instructors and mentors encourage students to reflect and problem solve independently, trying out different methods and strategies, then evaluating their effects. Collins et al. (1989) suggest that during exploration support fades and students take responsibility for their own learning. During this process, "students practice *framing* problems as well as solving them" (Ertmer & Cennamo, 1995 p. 48).

Authentic Assessment. Assessment strategies are integral to all components of the model and are designed to help instructors and students evaluate learning. In a situated learning environment, assessments need to reflect real-life tasks that require complex and challenging cognitive processes (Choi & Hannafin, 1995). A student's progress is measured by his or her own goals, intentions, and past achievements rather than against group criteria. In this administrator preparation model. Assessment focuses on thinking skills rather than knowledge recollection (Spiro, Feltovich, Jacobson, & Coulson, 1991). Assessments cause learners to use knowledge as a way to manipulate and interpret new circumstances, not simply to validate those that are familiar. In a situated learning environment, instructors recognize the range of strategies students use in problem solving, how these strategies are used and why. Additionally, instructors observe if students construct plausible solutions, provide varied viewpoints, and offer reasonable rationales to problems (Cunningham, 1991).

One framework for thinking about assessment is to match the type of assessment to the type of knowledge (i.e., declarative, procedural, contextual). Paper and pencil tests (e.g., essay questions) might be appropriate assessment measures for declarative knowledge. An in-basket activity or simulation might be most appropriate for procedural knowledge, whereas an authentic problem-based activity could be used to assess contextual knowledge.

Other types of assessment in this model might include portfolios and performance assessments. The portfolio illustrates the formative and summative journey of each student's growth through the program and can include the student's educational platform goals, internship projects, papers, and awards. In performance assessment, students produce things or perform tasks that require particular skills (Choi & Hannafin, 1995). The student's portfolio could contain some of these assessments. Performance assessments require the collection of sources such as observations, presentations, and projects. To be authentic, the performance must be connected to the real world of practice and require the application rather than the recollection of knowledge (Bergen, 1993). During the performance students have the opportunity to demonstrate a wide range of abilities.

In summary, the *Strategic Model for Administrator Preparation* presented conceptualizes the administrator preparation program components (i.e., internships, mentoring relationships, reflective practice, cohorts) in a cognitive apprenticeship framework. This model would strengthen the Danforth framework because the program components are not just singular "activities" or "experiences" that students partake in or complete during a particular time of their training (e.g., a monthly reflection seminar, an internship), but rather they are an integrative part of a strategic training plan. All the components in the model are linked so the focus on learning is not a "product" but a "process." Teaching and learning is done within the contexts in which the instructed skills are embedded, therefore students better understand the problems they will face and the skills they will need as educational leaders. This approach to administrator preparation emphasizes thinking skills, focuses on cognitive growth, allows students to construct understanding rather than being taught specific knowledge, requires the teacher to be a facilitator and coach, and assesses cognitive progress and the application of knowledge.

Final Comment

The changing nature of school leadership provides a challenge to administrator preparation programs. Yet, no one framework for administrator training can ensure that aspiring administrators will be prepared to lead schools into the 21st century. This paper highlighted the importance of cohorts, mentoring relationships, internships, and reflective practice in the preparation of administrators. This study offers a model of training that integrates adult learning principles and cognitive psychology theory. It focuses on administrator preparation as a continuous lifelong activity and prepares future educators to be reflective thinkers. The learning environments and experiences provided are consistent with those we would want future administrators to use in their own schools.

References

Anderson, M. E. (1989). Training and selecting school leaders. In S. C. Smith and P. K. Piele (Eds.), School leadership (p. 53- 84). Eugene, OR. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 309 504)

Barnett, B. G., & Muse, I. D. (1993). Cohort groups in educational administration: Promises and challenges. Journal of School Leadership, 3, 400-415.

Bergen, D. (1993). Authentic performance assessments. Childhood Education, 70(2), 99-102.

Brookfield, S. D. (1986). Understanding and facilitating adult learning. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Candy, P. C. (1991). Self-direction for lifelong learning: A comprehensive guide to theory and practice. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Choi, J. & Hannafin, M. (1995). Situated cognition and learning environments: Roles, structures, and implications for design. Educational Technology, Research and Development Journal, 43(2), 53-69.

Collins, A. (1991). Cognitive apprenticeships and instructional technology. In L. Idol & B. F. Jones (Eds.), Educational values and cognitive instruction: Implications for reform (pp. 121-138). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence, Erlbaum.

Collins, A., Brown, J. S., & Newman, S. E. (1989). Cognitive apprenticeship: Teaching the craft of reading, writing, and mathematics. In L. B. Resnick (Ed.), Knowing, learning, and instruction: Essays in honor of Robert Glaser (pp. 453-494). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Cordeiro, P. A. and others. (1993, February). The training of school administrators: The roles of practitioners, students and professors. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of School Administrators, Orlando, FL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 370 206)

Cunningham, D. (1991). Assessing constructions and constructing assessments: A dialogue. Educational Technology, 31(5), 13-17.

Danforth Foundation. (1989). Searching for the right reforms. St. Louis, MO: Author.

Ertmer, P.A., & Cennamo, K. S. (1995). Teaching instructional design: An apprenticeship model. Performance Improvement Quarterly, 8(4), 43-58.

First, P. F., & Knudson, D. P. (1992, Spring). Evaluation report of the Danforth Principal Preparation Program. University of Oklahoma.

Freire, P. (1989). Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: Continuum.

Greenfield, P. M. (1984). A theory of the teacher in the learning activities of everyday life. In B. Rogoff & J. Lave (Eds.), Everyday cognition: Its development in social context (pp. 117-138). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hill, M. S. (1992). Graduate cohorts: Perceptions of benefits and catalysts to cohesiveness or 19 heads are better than one. Unpublished manuscript.

Hills, J. (1975). The preparation of administrators: Some observations from the "firing line." Educational Administration Quarterly, 11(3), 1-20.

Knowles, M.S. (1987). Adult Learning. In R. L. Craig, (Ed.), Training and Development Handbook (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Kolb, D. (1984). Experiential Learning. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Kraus, C. (1996). Administrator preparation programs: Impact on job preparedness and learning. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT.

Krueger, J. (1993, April). Administrative preparation: Exploring differences between traditional and innnovative programs. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Atlanta, GA.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Leithwood, K. A., Begley, P., & Cousins, B. (1990). The nature, causes, and consequences of principals' practices: An agenda for future research. Journal of Educational Administration, 28(4), 5-31.

Merriam, S. B., & Caffarella, R. S. (1991). Learning in adulthood. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J., et al. (1990). Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: A guide to transformative and emancipatory education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Milstein, M. (1990). Rethinking the clinical aspects in administrative preparation: From theory to practice. In S.L. Jacobson & J. Conway (Eds.), Educational leadership in an age of reform. New York: Longman.

Milstein, M. & Associates. (1993). Changing the way we prepare educational leaders: The Danforth experience. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.

Murphy, J. (Ed.). (1990). The educational reform movement of the 1980s: Perspectives and cases. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

Murphy, J. (Ed.). (1993). Preparing tomorrow's school leaders: Alternative designs. University Park, PA: UCEA, Inc.

Murphy, J., & Hallinger, P. (1987). Approaches to administrative training in education. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Prestine, N. A., & LeGrand, B. F. (1991). Cognitive learning theory and the preparation of educational administrators: Implications for practice and policy. Educational Administration Quarterly, 27, 61-89.

Schön, D. A. (1987). Educating the reflective practitioner. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Spradley, J. P. (1979). The ethnographic interview. Forth Worth, TX: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston.

University Council for Educational Administration. (1987). Leaders for America's schools: The report of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration. Tempe, AZ: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 286 265)

Yerkes, D., Norris, C., Basom, M., & Barnett, B. (1994). Exploring cohorts: Effects on principal preparation and leadership practice. Connections! Conversations on Issues of Principal Preparation, 2(3), 1, 5-8.